PROVISIONAL
For participants only

NPT/CONF.IV/MC.I/SR.4
14 November 1990

Original: ENGLISH

FOURTH REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

MAIN COMMITTEE I

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 4th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 30 August 1990, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. ADEYEMI (Nigeria)

CONTENTS

Review of the operation of the Treaty as provided for in its article VIII (3):

Implementation of the provisions of the Treaty relating to non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, disarmament and international peace and security:

(1) Articles I and II and preambular paragraphs 1 to 3

Corrections to this record should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Official Records Editing Section, room E.4108, Palais des Nations, Geneva.

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

REVIEW OF THE OPERATION OF THE TREATY AS PROVIDED FOR IN ITS ARTICLE VIII (3) (agenda item 13):

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE TREATY RELATING TO NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS, DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY:

(1) ARTICLES I AND II AND PREAMBULAR PARAGRAPHS 1 TO 3

The CHAIRMAN announced that the programme of work provided for three formal meetings at which members could make statements on the record concerning the topics to be dealt with in the working groups established by the Committee at its third meeting to facilitate the consideration of matters before it under agenda item 13. The current meeting would be given over to statements on articles I and II and preambular paragraphs 1 to 3 of the NPT. Those topics would be taken up by Working Group I immediately after the meeting had risen.

Ms. MASON (Canada) said that the basic non-proliferation goals of the NPT could not be satisfied unless there was absolute and complete compliance with articles I and II by all States Parties. Main Committee I should emphasize in its report that such compliance was essential to ensure international security and to promote wider disarmament. Clearly, the international disarmament agenda would be set back dramatically if more nuclear-weapon States, beyond the existing five, emerged. Regional tensions, particularly in South Asia and the Middle East, would be exacerbated if States in those areas openly developed nuclear weapons. Canada therefore called on all nuclear-capable States not parties to the NPT to accede to the Treaty or at a minimum to accept its principles.

In the Canadian view, compliance by the nuclear-weapon States with article I had been satisfied. There was no evidence that those States had contributed to the development of nuclear weapons in other countries. It was gratifying that France and China, although not parties to the NPT, had maintained compliance with article I. The nuclear-weapon States should, however, take particular care that their military, scientific and civil nuclear co-operation with non-nuclear-weapon States did not - even inadvertently - contribute to any nuclear weapons capacity.

Although there was no evidence that any non-nuclear-weapon State Party to the NPT had violated the article II obligation not to develop nuclear weapons or explosive devices, her delegation was less sanguine that compliance - at

least in spirit - by all Parties with article II had been complete. Statements by any Party about the need to develop such weapons, clandestine procurement of nuclear-sensitive items or evidence of unsafeguarded nuclear activity could raise concerns in that regard. It was thus vital for all States Parties at the Review Conference to reaffirm the importance of full compliance with article II. It should be emphasized in the Final Document that States Parties should refrain from any word or deed that could raise questions about compliance. In short, Parties should not only comply, but be seen to comply.

Mr. FLYNN (Ireland) said that the report of Main Committee I on articles I and II and preambular paragraphs 1 to 3 of the NPT was of pivotal importance to the work of the Conference. Ireland's view, as explained by its Foreign Minister in his statement in the general debate in plenary, was that the dangers of horizontal proliferation had not lessened since the last Review Conference; rather, they had increased, and were taking on new and more secretive forms. The primary task was therefore to send out a clear and unambiguous signal from the Conference that all the States Parties were earnest in their commitment to the basic objectives of the Treaty, as set out in articles I and II, and that they would comply fully with their provisions.

Accordingly, his delegation believed that the Committee's report should focus in particular on the following points. The Conference should call for complete and absolute compliance with articles I and II by all Parties to the Treaty. There should be a strong statement of the deep concerns expressed during the Conference about the risk of proliferation and the danger of nuclear war arising from any proliferation. A review of the implementation of the provisions of articles I and II since 1985 should be undertaken. Lastly, the report should reflect the concerns expressed about the proliferation dangers arising from the activities of States which were not parties to the Treaty.

Mr. HOULLEZ (Belgium) said that, in his delegation's view, very few basic changes would have to be made to the text of the Final Declaration adopted at the Third Review Conference in 1985. That comment held true especially for preambular paragraphs 1 to 3, which seemed to have been unanimously confirmed. However, their wording might be brought up to date by stating, for example, that a nuclear war could not be won and must never be fought and by stressing the need to avoid any proliferation.

Concerning article I, there was no reason to doubt compliance by the nuclear-weapon States which recognized themselves as such. With regard to article II, his delegation believed that the Final Declaration should indicate that, notwithstanding the lack of clear evidence, there were serious concerns about the implementation of that article by some States Parties; hence the need in the Final Document to make a strong appeal to all Parties to comply strictly and scrupulously with their obligations and to avoid any actions which might cause or add to such concerns.

In his plenary statement, he had already expressed his delegation's concern about possible proliferation among States not parties to the Treaty which had nuclear programmes that might lead them - or perhaps had already led them - to acquire nuclear weapons capability. He therefore believed that the relevant paragraph of the 1985 Final Declaration should be strengthened to reflect the extent of that danger, above all if it was associated with ballistic missile capability for delivering powerful weapons of destruction, especially nuclear weapons. The appeal made by several States, including Belgium, for the widest possible adherence to the Missile Technology Control Régime should appear in the Final Document.

Referring to the last paragraph of the part of the 1985 Final Declaration relating to articles I and II and preambular paragraphs 1 to 3, he said that it was preferable, in view of developments in the international climate and the situation in certain regions, that there should be no mentioning of specific countries in the corresponding section of the report. If that approach was to be taken, his delegation would feel obliged to call for the naming of all countries that constituted a potential danger.

Mr. THIELICKE (German Democratic Republic) said that the general debate had revealed a consensus on two major points: first, that the NPT remained an important instrument for international peace and security; and, secondly, that further measures were required to strengthen the Treaty. In that connection, the need for universal adherence was particularly emphasized. Those basic ideas should be reflected in the Final Document, which should also restate that preambular paragraphs 1 to 3 remained valid and underline the fact that non-proliferation was an essential means of preventing nuclear war.

In addition, the Conference might welcome the positive developments in the international situation since the last Review Conference, especially in the East-West context and in relations between the Soviet Union and the

United States. Furthermore, it could express the hope that that tendency would be continued and become worldwide, thereby improving the conditions for the implementation of the NPT.

Concerning articles I and II, the Conference should reaffirm that the strict observance of the terms of those articles remained central to achieving the objectives of the Treaty. It could acknowledge the declarations by the States Parties with regard to the fulfilment of their obligations under articles I and II and take note of the concerns which had just been expressed by the delegations of Canada and Ireland.

Lastly, it might be worthwhile if the Final Document reflected the conviction that universal adherence to the NPT remained the best way to strengthen the barriers against the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The Conference should therefore urge all States not party to the Treaty to accede to it.

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.